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PART 42.

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1872

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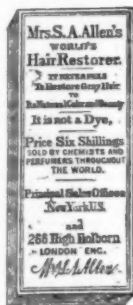
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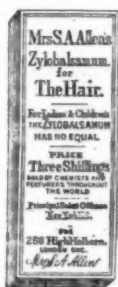
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CHAPTER III. HOME SWEET HOME.

FASHION, amidst the innumerable changes which she has insisted on, seems to have dealt lightly with Great Walpole-street. It may be that she has purposely left it untouched to remain an example of the heavy, solemn, solid style of a hundred years ago, a striking contrast to the "gardens," "crescents," "mansions," all stucco, plate-glass, and huge portico, of modern days; or it may be that finding it intractable, unalterable, unassailable, she has looked upon it as a relic of barbarism, and determined altogether to ignore its existence. Anyhow the street is very little changed since the days of its first erection; it still remains a long, and, to those gazing down it from either end, apparently interminable line of large, substantial, three-storied, dull-coloured brick houses, stretching from Chandos-square in the south to Guelph Park in the north, so long, so uniform, so unspeakably dreary as to give colour to the assertion of a celebrated wit who, on his death-bed moaning forth that "there is an end to all things," added feebly, "except Great Walpole-street."

In its precincts gravity and decorum have set up their head-quarters; on many of its door-plates the passer-by may read the names of distinguished members of the faculty, old in age and high in renown, pupils of Abernethy and Astley Cooper, who with the first few hundreds which they could scrape together after their degrees were obtained, hired, and furnished, as a first step to professional status, the houses in which they still reside, and in which

they have since inspected so many thousand tongues, and passed the verdict of life or death upon so many thousand patients. Youth must be resident here and there in Great Walpole-street, as in other places, but if so, it is never seen. No nurse-maids with heads obstinately turned the other way drive the pleasant perambulator against the legs of elderly people airing themselves in the modified sunlight which occasionally visits the locality; no merry children troop along its pavement; from the long drawing-room windows hung with curtains of velvet and muslin issues no sound of piano or human voice. Although there is no beadle to keep inviolate its sanctity, the street-boy as he approaches its confines stops his shrill whistling, and puts his tip-cat into his pocket; the "patterers" of the second edition pass it by, conscious that the rumours of war, or of the assassination of eminent personages, will fall flat upon the ears of the inhabitants, while even the fragmentary announcement, "Elopement—young lady—noble markis," will fail in extracting the pence from the pockets of the denizens of the lower regions in this respectable quarter.

It is essentially a carriage neighbourhood, with ranges of mews branching out of, and running parallel to it; and the vehicles are quite in keeping with the street and with their owners. Besides the doctors' broughams, high swinging chariots, now scarcely ever seen save on drawing-room days or in carriage bazaars, with huge hammercloths and vast emblazoned panels, are there common enough. Roomy landaus, broad barouches, with fat horses, the leather of whose harness is almost invisible beneath the heavy silver plating, coachmen in curly white bob-wigs, and giant footmen gor-

geous in hair-powder, all these are to be found in Great Walpole-street.

Money, money, money! it all seems to say. We have money, and we will take care that you shall know it. We will not pay enormous rents for poky tenements in May-fair, or straggling caravanseries in Tyburnia; we do not expend our substance in park-phaetons or Victorias any more than in giving "drums," or "at homes." We have, during the season, several dinner-parties; at which the wine set before you does not come from the grocer's or the publican's, but has been in our cellars for years; several musical evenings, and one or two balls. We go to the Opera three or four times during the season, occasionally to the theatre, frequently to a classical concert, or an oratorio; but we would as soon think of attending a prize-fight as a pigeon-match, or of prohibiting our woman-kind from going to church, as of taking them to listen to comic songs in a supper-room. We are rich, which you may be; but we are respectable, which you are not! Vaunt your fashion as much as you please, but the home of moneyed decency and decorum is Great Walpole-street.

Six o'clock on an October evening, with a chill damp wind howling at intervals through the funnel made by the opposing lines of houses, is not the time in which this locality looks its best. If it is dreary in the spring brightness, in the summer sunshine, it is doubly dreary in the autumn decadence, when the leaves torn from the trees in Guelph Park mix with the dust and bits of straw and scraps of paper which gather together in swerving eddies in every possible corner, and when in most of the houses the shutters are still closed, and the blinds have not shed the newspaper coverings in which they have been enwrapped during the absence of the inhabitants. In one of the largest houses of the street, however, on the particular October evening in question, no such signs of absenteeism were visible; the whiteness of the broad door-step was unsullied, the plate-glass windows were free from speck or spot, the dwarf wire blinds in the dining-room stood rigidly defiant of all criticism, and the muslin curtains in the drawing-room seemed to have lost all the softness and pliancy of their nature, and hung stiff, and white, and rigid, as the gaunt and bony hands which from time to time pushed them on one side, as the blank and colourless face which from time to time

peered through them into the street. These hands and that face belonged to Mrs. Calverley, the mistress of the mansion. A thin, spare woman of fifty years of age, with a figure in which were angles where there should have been roundness, and straightness of outline where there should have been fulness. Her silk dress was of an undecided fawn-colour, and in place of any relieving white collar, she wore a wisp of black net round her throat. Her face was long, with a large straight nose, prominent eyes of steely blue, and a long upper lip, between which and its thin pallid companion there gleamed a row of strong white teeth. Her thin scanty iron-grey hair was taken off from her forehead above the temples and gathered into a small knot at the back; such an expanse of colourless flesh, such a dull level waste of human features unrelieved by the slightest scintilla of interest or sympathy!

In her prim, flat-soled creaking shoes, Mrs. Calverley walked to the window, pushed back the curtains, and looked out down the silent street; then, with a sound which was something between a sigh of despair and a snort of defiance, she returned to the low prie-dieu chair worked in wool, but covered with a shiny, crackling, yellow substance, and arranging her scanty drapery around her, interwove her bony fingers in her lap and sat bolt upright, staring rigidly before her. All the furniture in the room which was capable of being covered up was clad in a uniform of brown holland, the chairs were dressed in pinafores, the big broad sofa had a loosely cut great-coat of the same material; even the chandeliers had on holland bags. There was no light in the room, but the gas lamps in the street were reflected from the bare shining rose-wood table, from the long grand piano-forte, from the huge ormolu clock ticking gravely on the mantelpiece, from the glass shades enshrining wax flowers and fruit, which made such a poor pretence of being real, and from the old-fashioned handsomely cut girandoles. By the chair in which Mrs. Calverley was seated stood a frame of Berlin work; in the middle of the hearth-rug before the fireplace—fireless now, and filled with a grim pattern of cut coloured paper—lay a stuffed white-haired dog, intently regarding his tail through his glass eyes, and apparently wondering what he had done in life to be consigned to such a degraded position.

A quarter-past six, half-past, a quarter to seven, ring out from the neighbouring

church, and at each sound of the chimes Mrs. Calverley rises to her feet, creaks across to the window, looks forth, creaks back again, and resumes her stony position. At length there comes a half-timid ring of the bell, which she recognises at once, straightens her back, and settles herself more rigidly than ever. A few minutes after, the drawing-room door opens, and a voice, the owner of which cannot be seen, is heard saying, "Dear me, all in darkness, Jane?"

Mrs. Calverley makes no reply, but rings the bell, and when the servant appears, says to him in a thin acid voice, "You can light the gas, James, and now that your master has come home at last, dinner can be served."

Upon this remark, Mr. Calverley's only comment is a repetition of "Dear me." He is a middle-sized, pleasant-looking man, with fair hair, slightly sprinkled with grey, grey whiskers, light-blue eyes, and marvellous pink and white complexion like a doll. A gentlemanly-looking man in his plain black frock-coat and waistcoat, grey trousers, black silk cravat, and pearl pin, and neat buttoned boots. He looks rather nervously to his wife, and edges his way towards her round the table. When he is within a few feet of her he produces a newspaper from his pocket, and makes a feeble tender of it, saying, "The evening paper, my dear; I thought you would like to see——"

"I should like to see you attempt to relieve the monotony of my life, Mr. Calverley, and not to leave me here alone, while you were doubtless enjoying yourself."

"My dear, I assure you I have come straight home."

"Did business detain you until after six o'clock in Mincing-lane?"

"No, my dear, of course not till six o'clock; I walked home, and on my way I just looked in at the club, and——"

"At the club!" That was all Mrs. Calverley said, but the manner in which she said it, had its due effect. Mr. Calverley opened the leaves of a photograph album, with every portrait in which he was thoroughly familiar, and began to be extremely interested in its contents.

"Dinner will be ready directly," said Mrs. Calverley; "had you not better wash your hands?"

"Thank you, my dear," said the disconsolate man; "but I washed them at the club——" He pulled himself up just in time; the obnoxious word had very nearly

slipped out, but the servant announcing dinner at the moment, and Mrs. Calverley laying the tips of her bony fingers in the hollow of her husband's arm, the happy pair proceeded to the banquet.

It was a good dinner, handsomely served, but Mr. Calverley can scarcely be said to have enjoyed it. At first he audibly asked for wine, but after he had been helped three or four times, he glanced hurriedly across the long table, at the other end of which his wife was seated, and furtively motioned to the butler by touching his glass. This pantomime and its results were soon noticed by Mrs. Calverley, who, after glaring at her husband for a moment, gave a little shiver, and said:

"It is of no use paying Doctor Chipchase his fees if his advice is to be scouted in this manner; you know what he said about your drinking wine!"

"My dear, I only——"

"You only fly in the face of Providence, Mr. Calverley, and behave unjustly to the office in which your life is insured. You only add another to the long catalogue of weaknesses and moral cowardices, by the constant display of which you render my life a burden to me. I am sick of talking to you myself. I shall write and ask Martin to come and stay with us for a few weeks, and see what effect his influence will have upon you."

"I am sure I shall be very glad to see Martin, my dear," said Mr. Calverley, after standing up reverently to say grace on the removal of the cloth; "he is a very good fellow, and——"

"Don't talk of a clergyman of the Church of England in that way, Mr. Calverley, if you please; 'good fellow,' indeed! My son Martin is a good man, and an ornament to his calling."

"Yes, my dear, of course he is; preaches an excellent sermon, does Martin, and intones quite musically. I should like to see him a little more cheerful, I mean a little less ascetic you know; take his wine more freely, and not look quite so much as if he was fed upon parched peas and filtered water."

"You are profane, as usual," said his wife. "Whenever you touch upon any member of my family, your temper gets the better of you, and your uncontrollable tendency to scoffing and scepticism breaks forth. Perhaps you will not think it too much trouble to pass me the biscuits."

"My dear Jane!" murmured the wretched man, and after handing the silver biscuit-

barrel to his wife, he sat by, not daring to help himself to another glass of wine from the well-filled decanters before him, while the mere fact of seeing her munching away at the hard farinaceous food nearly drove him mad with thirst.

When Mrs. Calverley had concluded this succulent repast, she rose from her seat, and, without taking any notice of her husband, creaked stiffly out of the room. John Calverley, lover of ease and tranquillity as he was, scarcely regretted this little conjugal dispute, inasmuch as that if Mrs. Calverley had not, in consequence of the words that had passed between them, been on her dignified behaviour, she would have remained to lock up the wine. Whereas John managed to swallow two glasses of his favourite Madeira before he joined her in the drawing-room.

It was not very cheerful in the drawing-room; the gas had been turned low down, and the principal light in the room, much softened and shaded, came from a reading-lamp placed immediately above the work-frame at which Mrs. Calverley's bony fingers were busily engaged depicting the story of Jael, with a very rugged profile, and Sisera, the death glare in whose eyes was represented by a couple of steel beads. John Calverley, furtively wiping his lips after the Madeira, shambled awkwardly into the room, and could scarcely repress a groan at the ghastliness of its appearance. But the generous wine which he had drunk helped to cheer him a little; and after wandering to and fro in a purposeless manner, he approached his wife, and said:

"Wont you play something, dear?"

"No, thank you," replied Mrs. Calverley, "I wish to finish this work."

"It is rather a nice thing," said John, bending over the production, and criticising it in a connoisseur-like manner; "what is it all about?"

"It is well that no one is here to hear this lamentable display of ignorance," said Mrs. Calverley, with a snort. "It is a scriptural story, Mr. Calverley, and is intended as a footstool for the church of St. Beowulph."

"Oh yes," said John, nodding his head. "I know—Bewsher's place."

"It would be more decent, as well as more correct, to speak of it as the church in which Mr. Bewsher is officiating minister, I think," said Mrs. Calverley, with another snort.

"To be sure, my dear; quite correct," said peace-loving John. "By the way,

talking about officiating ministers, perhaps you had better not ask Martin to come to us just yet; I have got to go down to that place in the North next week."

"What place in the North?" said Mrs. Calverley, looking up.

"What place? Why, my dear, Swartmoor, of course—the foundry, you know; that's the only place I go to in the North."

"I don't know what place you do or do not go to in the North, or anywhere else, Mr. Calverley," said his wife, sticking her needle into the canvas, and interlacing her bony fingers and sitting bolt upright, as she glared straight at him; "I only know this, that I am determined not to stand this state of things much longer."

"But, my dear——"

"Don't 'my dear' me, if you please, but listen to what I have to say. When I married you, Mr. Calverley, to my sorrow, now some ten years ago, you were nothing more than the head clerk in the house of Lorraine Brothers, which my grandfather had founded, which my father and uncles had established, and in which my late husband, Mr. Gurwood, had been a sleeping partner."

"I must say that——"

"Silence, if you please, I will not be interrupted. I took you from that inferior position, and made you my husband. I made you master of this house and my fortune. I raised you, Mr. Calverley. I tell you, I raised you, sir, from obscurity to position, from comparative penury to wealth; and what is my reward? Day after day you are absent from home at your counting-house in Mincing-lane. I don't object to that, I suppose it is necessary, but I know—yes, I know, Mr. Calverley—this is not my first experience of men of business; I have been a grand-daughter, a daughter, and a sister of the firm, and though latterly Mr. Gurwood was not quite regular in his attendance, at least at one time he was an excellent man of business—so that I may say also the wife of the firm, and I know that business hours are over at five, and that my sainted father used then to come straight home to Clapham by the omnibus."

"I——"

"You must allow me to speak, if you please; I will not be interrupted. Instead of which, I find you going to your club and dawdling there to the latest minute, often keeping my dinner waiting, and when you return home, your conversation is frivolous, your manner light and flighty, and

wanting in repose, your tastes and habits evidently unsuitable to a person in the position of my husband. I have borne all this without complaint, I know that all of us mortals—sinful mortals—have a cross to bear, and that you have been bestowed upon me in that capacity! But, be a lone deserted woman when I have a husband whose legitimate business it is to stay at home and take care of me, I will not! These Swartmoor Works are all very well, I dare say, and I know you declare that they bring in a vast deal of profit; but there was profit enough in my father's time without any of your iron works; and if you intend to continue paying them a visit every fortnight, and staying several days away, as you have done lately, they shall be given up, Mr. Calverley—they shall be given up, I say! I may be of no more concern to you than a chair or a table, but I will not be a deserted woman, and these iron works shall be given up!"

Those who had seen but little of the pleasant-faced John Calverley, would scarcely have recognised him in the darkly frowning man who now strode forward, and crossing his arms on the back of a chair immediately in front of his wife, said in a very quiet but very determined voice:

"They shall not be given up! Understand that once for all—they shall not be given up! You may say what you like, but I am master in my business, if not in my home, and they shall not be given up! And now, Jane, you must listen to me, must listen to words which I never intended to have said, if the speech you have just made had not rendered it necessary. You have told me what you have pleased to call facts, now I will give you my version of them. When I married you ten years ago—and God knows you cannot deplore that marriage more heartily than I do—I was, as you say, the head clerk of the firm which your father had established. But in his latter days he had been ill and inattentive to business, and after his death your uncles, to whom the concern was left, proved themselves utterly inadequate to its guidance; and if it had not been for me, the firm of Lorraine and Company would have been in the Gazette. You know this well enough; you know that I, as head clerk, took the whole affair on my shoulders, reorganised it, opened out new avenues for its commerce, and finally succeeded in making it what it was when you first saw me. You taunt me with having been raised by you from penury to position; but

you know that the whole of your fortune was embarked in the business, and that if it had not been for my clear head and hard work, you would have lost every penny of it. You accuse me of being light and frivolous and unsuited to you, of being away from my home, though, except on these business expeditions, not an evening do I pass out of your society. In return, I ask you what sort of a home you make for me? what sign of interest, of comfort, of anything like womanly grace and feeling is there about it? What reception do I meet with on my return from business? what communion, what reciprocity is there between us? Every word I say, every remark I make, you either sneer or snap at! You are a hard, intolerant Pharisee, Jane Calverley! By your hardness and intolerance, by your perpetually nagging and worrying at him, you tried to break the spirit of your former husband, George Gurwood, one of the kindest fellows that ever lived. But you failed in that, you only drove him to drink and to death. Now I have said my say, have said what I never intended should pass my lips, what never would have passed them, if it had not been for your provocation. I wish you good-night—I am now going to the club."

So saying, John Calverley bowed his head and passed from the room, leaving his wife no longer rigid and defiant, but swaying herself to and fro, and moaning helplessly.

VERY STRANGE TIMES.

IF certain small quartos tell truth, the most wonderful years ever seen in this land of ours were the years 1660 and 1661, when the elements in turn became "instruments of fear and warning," in a manner calculated to fright the isle out of its propriety, or the people out of the isle. The recorders of these strange events vouch for their informants being all honourable men, so, for convenience sake, we will, for the moment, assume the tales they tell to be true; not wild hallucinations, or, worse still, pure inventions for the benefit of a political party under a cloud.

Comets, meteors, triple moons, blazing stars, blood-running streams, earthquakes, and whirlwinds figure in the catalogue of omens dire, but these are mere trifles. Two suns rose over Somerset, each carrying a mounted warrior within its circumference, directing the movements of two great armies

marshalled in the heavens, one of which took the northern sun by assault, and caused its armed tenants to evacuate it; when the rival luminaries amalgamated, the rival legions vanished, and the sun set in such lurid splendour that the country beneath appeared like fields of blood and fire. At Horsham, a great light divided and displayed two distinct armies, the amazed spectators beholding

Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons, and right form of war,

until the descent of a thick fog, smelling strongly of villanous powder, hid the conflict from their astonished eyes. Near Thame appeared a great light upon the ground, which gathered itself up into a pillar of fire, wherein could be plainly seen "an arm brandishing a flaming sword." Strange noises in the air startled four bean-cutters at two o'clock one September morning. One of the four had served as drummer in the king's army, and his ear recognised the sound of the call, then of a battle, with clash of armour, much "skreeking" and dying moans, the hubbub continuing until daybreak. Three honest Kentish men saw three blood-red clouds suddenly assume the forms of men, now on foot, now on horseback, dividing into parties, and engaging in fierce combats; these presently vanished, giving place to two mounted warriors, who, melting into nothingness, left the sky in possession of a giant phantom overshadowed by a gallows; and he, too, after triumphing awhile, disappeared. A pleasanter vision greeted some Lincolnshire field-workers, who heard beautiful music coming from they knew not where; soon they descried a large yellow cloud filled by a crowd of armed men marching in military order, followed by a body of youths and a multitude of children, the music rising higher and higher, until the mysterious procession passed out of sight.

The lesser lights could not set their watch in the sky without betraying belligerent propensities. Two stars, as big as the moon, appeared from under a fiery cloud at Ilford, and contended for supremacy, until one grew smaller and smaller, and finally disappeared altogether, while its conqueror, increased in size and lustre, poured forth streams of fire and blood for a couple of hours. Cornish folks were puzzled by the appearance of a large star, from which dangled the red-footed legs of a man. To this entered a square black thing three inches broad, taking up its quarters between the legs and the star;

then a second star came, and drove the first comer from the sky. Three men going to Ware were smitten by lightning, after which the sky grew so bright they thought there must be a great fire raging not far off; while they speculated as to its whereabouts, the fire ascended into the sky, three stars falling from it as it went, and flooding the earth with light. An ex-captain of the Life Guards, travelling between Ilford and Romford in company with an attorney's son, saw a fiery light issue from between two stars, take the shape of a bell, "as big as a candlestick," and fall down before them, illuminating the way so that they could distinguish the smallest pebbles on the road. Another midnight wanderer witnessed a shameful assault upon the queen of night; a bodiless arm striking fair Luna eight times with a sword, darkening her brightness with every stroke. May be it was indignation at such treatment that impelled the moon to shine in Somersetshire without reflecting the least shadow of hedge or tree, house or man.

Upon Coronation Day a person of honour, being moreover a knight and the son of a recusant, saw the perfect representation of a fortified town in the sky, while another gentleman beheld Windsor Castle standing amid the clouds in company with two other castles, names unknown. After this it is not surprising to hear of six Yorkshiremen seeing two or three steeples and several cathedrals floating high in air, some burning, some rent in twain, some upside down; or of some Sussex folks being bewildered by the appearance of three pulpits occupied by men in black, until the said men—parsons, of course—were expelled by a party of armed men, the exhibition concluding with two phantom men being drawn at a cart's-tail along the edge of a cloud. An inhabitant of "Darkin in Surrey," taking a walk one evening, beheld a strange cloud, and in it two churches, one in the form of a cathedral, very spacious and glorious, having upon it many goodly pinnacles. As he looked he thought it grew to a greater splendour and glory, glittering exceedingly. He saw, also, not far from it, another church, in comparison very mean, and specially observed that when the cathedral appeared most glorious the little church seemed most dark and obscure, but plainly discerned a very bright star in the midst of it, and another between the two edifices. Then he perceived a puff of breath upon the stately cathedral, and

immediately it fell and vanished, while the little church with the star on it waxed more and more glorious, but "upon some special occasion being called into his house, he saw not the end of it."

Among other aerial apparitions may be noted that of a lion standing over a party of reapers in a corn-field; of a pair of lions in Devonshire; and of a lion, unicorn, and bear in another quarter. The sailors in the Downs were startled one morning by seeing a lion in the eastern, and a dragon in the western heavens, engaged in a fierce fight, for the amusement, apparently, of a couple of giants. These, fading away, were succeeded by three naked men, airy castles, towns, and villages, finishing up with a terrific display of blood and fire. The master of a ship passing the Shingles saw a cloud rise from the ocean to a great height, and then let fall a long sword with fire issuing from its point, which, striking the sea, raised up a fearful storm. A wedding party, strolling on the banks of the Severn, saw a cloud rise out of the river, which opened and displayed a tall black man with a meagre face, running to and fro for a little while, and then giving place to a man on horseback, who retired to make way for a beautiful lady, who, after taking a stately walk, disappeared, and then the cloud itself dispersed into thin air. More curious still was the phantom on a white horse appearing in a cloud near Gloucester, for that descended into a meadow, careering therein with wonderful swiftness, to the dismay of the lookers-on, who turned and fled, while the object of their terror reascended into the cloud, and quickly sailed beyond their view.

One summer evening a Berkshire gentleman saw an incredible number of divers-shaped, divers-coloured balls, as large as cannon-balls, fly from the sun in an easterly direction; the sun appeared to become stationary in the heavens, and looked like "a burning flame turning round a small cloud, faster in its motion than any wheel." Three balls of fire fell from the sky, to the great alarm of sundry passengers by the Buckinghamshire waggon, but did not create half the sensation caused by one descending a chimney in Lewes, and plumping down in the parlour wherein sat the children and newly-made widow of one Mr. Dubble. This intruder into the domestic circle burned the parlour wainscot, and then made its way through the ceiling into an upper room, where the

defunct Dubble was laid out, finally taking its departure through the roof. The funeral was hastened, "and some of the neighbours confidently reported that the coffin which was buried was very light."

Shadowy armies were not confined to the upper regions: About sunset, on a December day, certain people of Weston, near Montgomery, saw, only four hundred paces distant, a ghostly array of horsemen riding two abreast, mounted on steeds of bay, white, grey, and black; for half an hour they watched the phantom soldiers pass by, and when they had gone, sought in vain for any traces of the hoofs of their horses on the ground over which they had ridden. About the same time a mysterious troop of horse was met on the Dorchester road by a godly minister, which troop, our prodigy chroniclers opine to have been the same troop that was seen in Wales; although they naively remark, "there is a rumour that the county troop was abroad that day, but we have not time now to examine it—we shall leave the reader to satisfy himself of the truth of the reports, which at present we have not time or opportunity to do." In May, 1660, a headless man clad in white appeared in Yorkshire, and was seen galloping across country, followed by an army of grey-coats, hacking and cutting a flock of sheep as they strove to escape through the gaps in the hedges, until a red-coated army came to the rescue, and drove the grey-coats away in utter rout. In Hertfordshire, a man, half white and half blood-red, was heard crying "Murder! Murder! Murder!" three times in a corn-field. St. Edmundsbury rejoiced in a mysterious brass kettle, upon which a strange inscription suddenly appeared, an inscription in which the word "Moloch" was conspicuous. As to the rest of it, we are told "what the words were, it is not convenient to relate, it being of a dangerous consequence to publish them, fearing lest indiscreet persons, and ill-affected, should make an ill-construction and application of them; besides, we are not without some jealousy lest there should be something of sorcery in it."

An Oxford student was awakened one night by a noise like the noise of geese; he arose and looked out of window, but could not see the disturbers of his rest. Returning bedwards, however, he was horrified by beholding a bishop in his lawn sleeves grovelling on the floor; he shouted out "Murder," and the spectre disappeared. Next night some of his fellow-collegians sat up with him; all of a sudden every

candle was extinguished, and the brave Oxonians fled instantaneously, leaving the mystery as much a mystery as before. Mr. Duncombe, of Bury, made short work of his uninvited visitors, but then they were not ghostly ones, but merely a large party of red spiders that, climbing two great posts at his door, spun a web from one to the other, and "wrapped themselves in it in two very great parcels." Mr. Duncombe laid the visitation to the account of some witch, but got rid of the spiders by lighting a straw fire under them. Mr. Martin, of Devonshire, was less fortunate. While walking in his own grounds he was attacked by a pair of ravens, and, although he kept them pretty well at bay, he took to his bed as soon as he got into the house. The ravens waylaid the servants despatched for the doctor; nevertheless the doctor came, but too late. What could a doctor do for a man when the church bell persisted in tolling for him? For three hours before Mr. Martin died did the bell itself toll his knell, ceasing directly he had drawn his last breath. A strange death, certainly. In "Bochanon" county occurred as strange a birth—a woman presenting her lord and master with a hairy creature having two heads, one above the other, and the uppermost the head of a lion. As soon as it was born this unwelcome little stranger ran up and down the house crying, "Woe, woe, woe to the world," until the disgusted father knocked it upon the head. "This is a certain truth!"

All the prodigies we have thus far recounted occurred in the provinces; but it must not be supposed that London did not enjoy its fair share of such wonders. Fiery darts flew over the City, St. Paul's was overshadowed by clouds of blood; a bright star of extraordinary dimensions, encompassed by six others of smaller size, fell in Smithfield; a fiery sword, like that seen over Rome before it was taken by the Goths, threatened Hogsgate; a pillar of fire hung over Bednal Green; monstrous sturgeons were seen above bridge, and, "which is very ominous," a great "porpus" leaped into a Thames waterman's wherry. About five o'clock one morning, two credible persons living near Piccadilla, going across the field by Pall-Mall, heard a noise as though a pound of gunpowder had exploded, and looking up beheld a body of fire bigger than the moon, from which issued a stream of fire, "about a flight shot in length, and five feet in breadth." Two besom-shaped meteors

swept nightly over Wood-street. Looking down upon Smithfield, a flame-coloured lion, flourishing a tail like a fox's brush, vomited clouds of yellow smoke, that gathered together and evaporated in flashes of lightning. When the quarters of seven executed men were set above the City gates a bright star shone at noon-day over Aldgate for five days in succession, and from the ghastly mementoes upon Bishopsgate seven pillars of smoke ascended.

On the 17th of April, 1661, a person coming townwards from Kentish-town met two men near the Pindar of Wakefield, who told him to look behind him; on turning, he saw in the air the apparition of the Tower, and presently afterwards beheld the whole City portrayed in the skies above him. Then it seemed to take fire, and upon the top of one of the gates appeared the semblance of a man's head on a pole. A strange apparition hovered above the White Tower, and in June the moat of the old stronghold was full of cakes of blood, lying upon the mud when the water was out, and showing through the water when the moat was full. A cloud kept passing backwards and forwards between Whitehall and the Parliament House, dropping fire upon each in turn. Over London Bridge were seen several aerial beasts, a nondescript monster, sundry male phantoms, four rainbows, and two armies.

Between seven and eight o'clock on the 21st of March, 1660, very many citizens of credit, if not of renown, became the amazed spectators of a grand transformation scene. First appeared a great cathedral with a high tower, and an oak with huge spreading branches, parted by a mountain base uppermost. Out of the centre of the last issued a devouring crocodile, which was successively transformed into a furious bull, a fierce lion rampant, a bear, and a boar. As the boar vanished the mountain split in two, each part bearing a great beast, one being an elephant with a castle on its back, the other of too doubtful an aspect to be identified, but resembling a lion more than any other creature. The elephant melted away, half a dozen men appeared and disappeared, and the lion changed into a horse and rider, coming only to give place to an open-mouthed whale. Next appeared a cardinal's hat, then a formidable army marching southwards, to meet another and join battle with it, and then without any discernible victory being won by either,

the opposing ranks became a confused cloud and so vanished.

Are our readers at all sceptical? If so, let them take warning from what befel an unbeliever: "Upon the 2nd of May, 1662, an honest and credible person, living near the Falcon, on the Bankside in Southwark, having occasion to be on the water about Æreife, late at night, did discourse with the waterman about the Book of Prodigies, saying he never could see anything of that nature which that book did make mention of, neither could he believe there was any truth in those stories. While he was thus discoursing there appeared suddenly a very great fire upon the water, which gave a very clear light; and immediately they saw two ships coming very near them, and were sorely afraid that they should have been boarded by them, and thereof the waterman did bestir himself to get out of the way, but his boat was fast. He thought at first he was aground; but finding it was not so, he attempted again to row, but could not make his boat stir. The ships now being very near them, one of them was turned into the likeness of a very tall man, about twenty feet high. Upon this, the person in the boat, being extremely affrighted, fell to praying, and immediately the appearance stood still, and was turned in on one side. They being very near it, and looking upon it about half an hour, precisely discerned the form of its countenance. At length they plainly saw fire come out of its belly, and then it moved towards the Bankside, and there consumed away as if it had been a barrel of pitch." Meanwhile the other ship had taken the shape of a castle, and it was not until both had disappeared that the waterman was able to move his boat, and convey his converted fare to his destination.

The circulators of these Munchausenisms certainly intended their readers to believe in them; whether they believed in them themselves we more than doubt. They wished to inspire their more ignorant fellows with the belief that the day of their triumph was at hand, and that these prodigies were so many signs of the good time speedily coming. Probably they thought such pious frauds no frauds at all, and had no hesitation, when their own invention failed, in having such things manufactured to order; just as dealers in articles of the sort now obtain any number of anecdotes of angelic infants and stupendously pious youngsters. It is strange,

perhaps, that such stories should emanate from folks who condemned dramatic and literary fictions as ungodly, and who were never weary of reproaching their adversaries with encouraging vain superstitions. Still we may hardly halloo. When a popular religious paper tells of a poor charwoman praying to be kept from the world, and soon afterwards losing her hand by an accident, thereby being made incapable of her usual work, and compelled to retire into an obscure garret, and live on the voluntary contributions of the charitable, and heads the story, *Prayer Answered*, it is plain we ourselves are not yet quite out of the wood, and therefore not entitled to laugh at similar freaks on the part of our ancestors.

GARDENING AT LILLE.

IN early summer, the rhythm of the railway train from Calais to Lille beats pleasant music, though somewhat monotonous—a pastorate in A flat, imbued throughout with quiet sweetness, to be marked "dolce" if arranged for the piano. To my mind, it nearly marked the measure of Haydn's "With verdure clad the fields appear, Delightful to the ravish'd sight," which I involuntarily kept humming to myself, as when one is haunted by the ghost of a tune. But it really is a well-sustained movement, *allegro moderato*, with ever-recurring themes (almost amounting to a refrain) of emerald pastures, lowing herds, slow-creeping streams, tufted pollards, tall elms, sometimes clustered into clumps, sometimes ranged in rectilinear rows, hedgeless fields of corn coming into ear, and market-gardens outspread before the towns and villages. Such is the burden of the song—the hymn of labour which man addresses to a bountiful Providence. The occasional floriture interspersed along its current, are patches of lilac-flowered poppies (grown to make salad-oil from their seed), sweet-scented areas of blossomed beans, and white lilies floating in every pool and river. The further you advance, the more cheerfully you find the earth to be singing with gladness. On quitting the main line of rail in order to take that which leads into the city, the locomotive makes a long *ad libitum* cadenza, the train meanwhile counting a pause. The gap in the fortifications by which it enters Lille is the double bar which closes the passage. The whole strain has not been long enough to

tire, but quite long enough to make you glad to listen to something new.

Many people are likely to pass through Lille this season, on their holiday trip; for Lille is on the way to the Rhine and divers other pleasant places. If fond of gardening, they may halt there with advantage for half a day or so. Lille can show gardens untouched by the ruin which has devastated those of Paris. Even supposing the poor Parc Monceaux put to rights again, who can forget that on *that* velvet sward, so many men were fusillés, beneath that other smooth turf so many more were buried, and though it is said they were taken away, they *may* be there still; that, on the edge of that flower-border, the wicked old woman sat down, refusing to budge further, saying that if she was to be shot, she might as well be shot *there*?—and she was shot, together with her lame husband, who begged her, by letting him hobble to the Place Vendôme, to prolong his life by the length of that halting pilgrimage. No; the gardens of Paris must still be haunted; their flowers, for a time, must owe their brightness to having been manured with human blood.

Poor Parc Monceaux, once the trimmest of trim Parisian gardens; perhaps the most highly finished horticultural gem in Europe; over-finished even, with the smooth elaborate hardness of a Flemish still-life picture, or a bouquet of porcelain flowers! One looked at it with the same sort of wondering curiosity as is excited by Chinese carvings in ivory, or other efforts of patience that have taken years to accomplish. Give me rather a broad effective sketch by one of our landscape-gardeners, from Capability Brown downwards. But there it was, comparatively small, as one of the public walks in the centre of civilisation; which smallness tempted its managers, instead of making it picturesque, to polish it up to the highest possible pitch, with grass-plots bright as any in the Emerald Isle, the result of perpetual watering with artificial dew, and with expensive plants lavished with a profusion which was called reckless, until it was discovered that the public money might be even more recklessly spent. What say you, for instance, to a bed of caladiums, an oval guessed to be ten yards long by five yards across at the middle, costing to fill it from the most reasonable nurseryman's, not much less than fifty pounds? All that *was*. Fuit. It is only now beginning to try hard to be once more its former self.

A change, too, has come over Lille and its gardens; but happily it is a change only in name, showing the transitory nature of all things French. Lille, like most important towns, towards the close of the Second Empire, has been considerably demolished, rebuilt, and enlarged. The result, as it stands at present, is a happy combination of the new with the old, still in the way of further completion. Meanwhile, the Rue Napoléon, really a noble street, has become the Rue Nationale, the Boulevard de l'Impératrice is re-christened the Boulevard de la Liberté—O Liberty, what things have men done in thy name!—the Jardin de l'Impératrice is now the Jardin de Vauban, and the Jardin de la Reine Hortense—well, I am not quite sure that the Queen Hortense has been pushed aside to make way for any citizen or citizenne. The really old streets and places retain their original names; and towns in this part of France have often droll ones. Lille has a Rue des Chats Bossus, a street of hump-backed cats, while Saint Omer has a Rue de l'Ane Avengle, a blind ass street. Lille also coincides with Saint Omer and Dunkerque (though not quite to so great an extent) in lodging work-people in cellar dwellings. There are cellar shops, even cellar flower-shops, cellar restaurants, and cellar tippling-places. Doth not Maria retail eatables by platefuls, to be consumed subterraneously on the premises, if such be the true interpretation of “A la Cave Marie on donne à manger par portion?” Perhaps even this Maria, like Sterne's, may whisper to some favoured customer, “Thou shalt not leave me, Sylvio.”

The Grande Place of Lille is the small, but sightly heart and centre which gives the impulse to a wide-spread circulation reaching extremities far beyond the circle of fortifications. On market-days it used to be crowded; but the erection of spacious covered markets in different parts of the town, has relieved it of all inconvenient plethora or congestion. Walk from the Grande Place up the Rue Nap—no, Nationale, and you will come to a public garden, to the right, which is a sort of preface to the other gardens. Enter; look round; and criticise.

The place is nicely kept, in respect to neatness; some of the combinations may be taken as experimental in point of taste, as all gardening must be, more or less. There is a bed of white-leaved centauray, with a broad border of Harry Hicover, a

dwarf geranium much in fashion in Paris before the war, with flowers approaching the orange nasturtium in colour. Mem. I am trying as a substitute for this centaury, both in masses and as a border, a native seaside plant, the horned poppy, *Glaucium flavum* or *luteum*, which has white, downy, deep-cut leaves, canary-yellow flowers, and a curious long seed-vessel, which gives it its name. This horned poppy, being perfectly hardy, deserves the patronage of amateurs and all whom it may concern. Collect the seed during your seaside strolls; sow in the open ground, and prick out the young plants where they are to remain.

There is a bed of double geraniums—scarlet *Gloire de Nancy* and pink-faced *Madame Lemoinne*; but they don't tell as bedding plants. In wet weather, the faded heads of flowers, brown and mouldy, remain upheld by the withered stalks, like used-up quids that had been tossed aside after exhaustion by some brave militaire. The only remedy for this is hand-picking, as soon as the flowers have lost their freshness.

There you behold a bed of pansies whose flowers, singly, are good for little or nothing—ill-shaped, ill-marked, meagre, though of a clear, honest blue—but which are pleasingly effective as a whole, because they are all the same variety, and of the same identical tint. Compare this with any collection of pansies (in which the object is to have the flowers as varied as possible), as seen from a distance, which you may remember beholding, and you will learn—though perhaps you knew it before—that mixed and parti-coloured pansies (that is, either of diverse colours in each flower, or a mixture of different self-coloured flowers in the same bed), produce no effect beyond that of a dingy patch upon the grass. To obtain from them any satisfactory result, in masses, you must combine, either in beds or in ribbons, selfs of the same identical hue.

In fact, one object in visiting gardens like this, is to study the effects of experimental combinations of vegetable hues, and to glean hints respecting horticultural contrasts—to learn what low trailing plant will make a suitable carpet and undergrowth beneath taller specimens; what foliage-border will best become what middle of flowers. Those broad patches of grey produce their effect; so do those tufts of variegated-leaved dahlias; so does that combination of india-rubber shrubs and golden-

feather pyrethrum, the one above and the other below. How do you like that oval mound of glaucous-green *echeveria* rosettes, bordered with *alternanthera*, whose leaves are beginning to assume the hue of badly-pickled red cabbage? It is a floral *salmagundi*, and decidedly curious. What do you think of that fringe of begonias on the shady side of a clump of shrubs? How do you approve of the employment of rhubarb as an ornamental plant? Is it not too suggestive of pudding and tart, to be made conspicuous in a place like this? But as for that, you will see, in the town, angelica grown in boxes as a window plant—and a plant of dignified presence it is.

At the very entrance of the prefatory garden, you may remark both the economy and the appropriateness of doing things well on a large scale and by wholesale. No doubt, both in private and public gardens, you have seen beds and grass-plots bordered by willow branches bent into a low arch by sticking both of their ends in the ground. By planting the foot of one arch in the middle of that preceding it, they are made to overlap each other, and the border becomes continuous. It makes a neat and pretty edging, with the double disadvantage that, if the willow twigs die, they rot, and if they don't die, they grow. In either case, neatness and regularity soon disappear. Here, and in the other Lillois gardens, the walks, beds, and lawns are bordered by a similar edging; only instead of perishable or sprouting willow twigs, it is made of durable cast iron. The colour acquired by exposure to the weather is not unlike that of seasoned bark, and the knots and natural roughnesses are imitated in the castings.

This edging gives great finish to the grounds at an expense which must be moderate, considering the enormous quantity employed. In Paris, not only the Bois de Boulogne, but the Buttes Chaumont, the Parc Monceaux, and other public parks and gardens, were edged with the very same material cast in similar pattern. Miles upon miles of it must have been manufactured for that purpose. It would have been curious to calculate how many hundred thousand tons of metal were then absorbed merely in edging the promenades of Paris.

After due attention paid to our horticultural preface, on leaving it we have only to cross a road to reach the plot of garden-ground named after the Queen Hortense. A

little maiden crosses with us, a girl of the period and of the place, knitting her own stockings with such absorbed earnestness that the ball of worsted falls from her pocket unobserved, and, sticking in a bush, unrolls a clue which promises to thread the way to some Fair Rosamond's bower. We inform her of the accident; at which she gaily retraces her steps, and succeeds in rewinding her yarn untangled, before it gets broken by passing carts and donkeys. She then calmly resumes her walk and her work, evidently quite as proud of herself as the smart, long-pinafores bourgeois children, sent out to take the air with their attendant *bonne*.

The area laid out under the invocation of Hortense Beauharnais, is devoted to utility—in unconscious irony of that lady's life, who was supposed to have a predilection for the ornamental. It is chopped up into small patches, which might serve as schoolboys' or old pensioners' gardens, only that every plant is labelled, and you find that the object is, if not exactly botany, at least the recognition of a certain number of plants. And it is good to know the individual aspect of the vegetables which supply those easily convertible articles, poison and medicine—henbane, belladonna, bittersweet, nightshade, foxglove; the Socratic, narcotic, large, land hemlock, and the still more virulent water hemlock. It is good to know plants which may be, though they are not commonly, turned to use, and which may be, though prejudice often prevents their being eaten—good King Henry spinach and sowthistle salad, the latter, according to Evelyn, “exceedingly welcome to the late Morocco ambassador,” and consumed at the present day with relish in the South of France. I fancy that watercress is the only wild salad eaten in England; on the Continent, the list is of a certain length.

One of the first things Queen Hortense presents you with is a small collection of hardy ferns. There is a *Lomaria crenulata*, small and pretty, which deserves extended patronage. For the rest, there they are, old familiar friends, “sitting for their pictures,” as they say in jail of a new-come prisoner, to the passing public, most of whom only care to know that the common bracken (not so easy as you may think to transplant into your garden) makes a pleasant and wholesome stuffing for beds; that small fronds of the young male fern fringe the outside of a bouquet with sufficient elegance; and that charcutiers (ham-

shop keepers) employ the same to set off cream-cheeses and half-salt sardines. In fact, fern-fronds are the outward and visible sign of the delicacies to be obtained in what we should call “Italian warehouses.” Note that some of the names Queen Hortense has given to her ferns, have become a little antiquated, and are not according to Thomas Moore, F.L.S. Never mind that; an acquaintance with synonyms is part of an amateur's bounden duty.

Another road to cross, and you step at once into what was the *Jardin de l'Impératrice*, until untoward events deprived it, or her, of that honour. For whose was the loss; the garden's or the empress's? It is now Vauban's Garden, the military genius who planned the citadel of Lille and other famous strongholds. To prevent the visitor's making any mistake about the matter, at the very entrance he is confronted by a huge bed of Mrs. Pollock geranium carpeted with blue lobelias, on whose side, facing the entrance, the name of the individual to whose memory this park has been reconsecrated, namely, J. VAUBAN, is horticulturally inscribed in giant letters, composed of sea-green asterisks of *echeveria* embroidered on a red-brown ground of *alternanthera*.

Here again we have the Parc Monceaux style carried out with the most elaborate finish; for the town of Lille is passing rich, and willing to spend its money on what it thinks money's worth—and surely a handsome public garden may be included in that category. Workmen are encouraged to “fiddle away their time” on minutiae that would elsewhere be disregarded. Look at that stalwart fellow in a blue linen coat, cutting the narrow grass border with his pocket-knife. He will not have one blade of grass anywhere a quarter of an inch longer than another elsewhere. Observe that border of *Géant des Batailles* roses, with every branch pegged down close to the ground, so that the flowers look like big red daisies peeping just above the dark green foliage. Opposite are borders of *Souvenir de Malmaison* and *Aimée Vibert* (both white roses), treated in the same way. The effect is pretty; but what endless pegging and trimming it necessitates! High keeping is spread over the place, like a mantle. Nevertheless, certain overworked points made me think of a perfectly-clipped poodle dog, with his close-shorn reins, his curly mane, and the imperial tuft at the tip of his tail.

Analogous in design and execution is

the artificial brook crossed by stepping-stones, which you cannot fancy to be a mountain stream, however hard you try. Idem of the artificial rock and cavern hung with made stalactites which close the scene, also admitting the water between stepping-stones, to aid little boys in their search after sticklebacks. Of the beds, "massifs," gaudy or grey, interspersed about the park, I would diffidently observe that they are too high, too much like puddings boiled in a mould, or cakes richly decorated by the confectioner. If you cut into them with a spade, you would expect to find them filled with mince-meat or venison pasty. At public rejoicings, the town might convert them into sausage-rolls of Garagantuan proportions.

Beyond the ci-devant Jardin de l'Impératrice, Lille has also its Bois de Boulogne, a welcome walk or drive on a summer evening. But, s'il vous plait, as my cabman says to his horse, don't neglect to be wheeled, at a walking pace, along the Esplanade, with its rows of lime-trees hung with balmy flowers. Of all town-avenue trees, give me the lime, so sweet and so wholesome. Neither the sterile elm, ever gnawed by beetle-grubs, nor the acrid horse-chestnut, shabby before summer is closed, can compete with the perfumed health-giving lime. Is not a tisane, or ptisane, of lime blossoms the most rectifying and restorative of all French herb-drinks? When the tree is cut down, does not its wood evoke sweet music when made into pianoforte keys—and played on by a cunning player?

Lille also possesses gardens not ornamental, of a kind happily not common in Great Britain, our area not being studded with fortified towns. They are in a low style of art, for they are in a hole. Lille has a citadel renowned for its strength; the strength of the citadel lies partly in its ditches, which can be filled with water in time of need; but which, when nothing presses, are dry, with only a little run of water creeping slowly along their middle. The soldiers, tired of war's alarms, seek their relief in cultivating as kitchen gardens the bottoms of these military ditches, which are enriched with sundry and divers deposits. Discarding the glories of their uniform, except their kepi and their madder-dyed pantaloons, they dig, and hoe, and plant, and weed, till the earth gives such glorious crops of vegetables as ought to make the old brick walls of the fortress smile and say, they had rather be pelted

with potatoes and turnips than with cannon-balls. For the gallant gardeners, pacific virtue proves its own reward. They gain both an appetite and the means of satisfying it.

If your day at Lille is still too long, there is an ever-ready resource at hand for exploring the unknown in a foreign land, of which I often avail myself with advantage. Look out for any long-course omnibus, no matter whither it goes, for all is new to you. There are always some standing here near the Hôtel de Ville. Mount on its top; let it take you as far as it will, and then let it take you back again. The penetrative power of the omnibus is something wonderful. As Herschel sounded the heavens with his telescope, you may sound terræ incognitæ by means of your omnibus.

A welcome refuge on a rainy afternoon may be found in the picture galleries in the Hôtel de Ville. The Museum of Natural History is in the Lycée, once Imperial. Among the pictures are some good and curious originals, and not a few fair copies of world-renowned paintings. Good copies, like good engravings, are always instructive. Besides which, the visitor feels less insulted by a picture labelled, "D'après So-and-so," than by an impudent daub calling itself Titian or Raphael. The drawings and studies by masters, old and new, are deserving of a careful inspection. There are two pictures (Nos. 104 and 105), signed G. Courbet, the demolisher of the Vendôme Column. Would it surprise him if some avenger of the column were to put his foot through each of those pictures?

OLD LOVE.

THE broad sword loses its glitter
As it hangs in the ancient hall,
Rusted and blunt grows the keen-edged blade,
That once so gallant a champion made,
As it gleamed from the castle wall.

The jewel loses its lustre
As it lies in its velvet nest;
Till dull and dim is the good red gold,
That showed such a royal light of old,
As it flashed from a beauty's breast.

The blue eye loses its power
As age comes creeping on;
The fair form droops from its stately grace,
The roses fly from the care-worn face,
The charm from the trembling tone.

The colour fades from the canvas,
The magic from ringing rhyme,
Now, is there a joy in this world of ours,
Riches, or glories, or hopes, or flowers,
But dies at the touch of Time?

Ay, Love in his pure serenity
Can the pitiless spell defy,
For tears cannot drown, nor absence dim,
And death itself may not conquer him,
For true love never can die.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

IMPRISONED FOR LIFE.

AT six o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 21st of September, 1820, passers-by were surprised to see that the shutters of the shop of Christopher Bäumler, a well-to-do corn-chandler, who kept a brandy shop near St. Laurence's Church, in the Königsstrasse, Nuremberg, were singularly enough still up. As Bäumler was a thrifty bustling man, who usually flung open his doors as early as four to accommodate waggoners and carters arriving for the early markets, a crowd, half curious, half alarmed, soon collected round the house. Friends and neighbours rang, but no one answered. At last some of the younger and more impetuous obtained permission of the police, and, planting a ladder, ascended and forced open a first-floor window. Some evil agency had evidently been at work, for drawers, chests, and closets had been burst open, and evidently by a robber. Evil agency, indeed, for hurrying down-stairs and going into the shop they discovered in a corner close to the door the bloody corpse of Schütz, Bäumler's only maid-servant, and in the parlour, near the stove, the corn-chandler himself, dead, with his skull crushed in.

Between two bins of meal and salt the servant was lying on her back with her head shattered, and her feet, which had no shoes on, turned towards the door. Her face and clothes, the floor, the two bins, and the wall, were sprinkled with blood. Not far from the body a small comb was picked up, and a little further on there were some fragments of another. In the very furthest corner of the parlour, which was furnished with table and benches for customers who came to drink, and between the stove and a small table, the shuddering neighbours found the body of poor Bäumler stretched on his back, the head resting on a small overturned stool. A pipe, and several small coins, lay near the body, as if the murderer had dropped them when rifling the corn-chandler's pocket, which was turned inside out, and stained red by the cruel hands that had evidently ransacked it for money and for keys. The floor, stove, and wall were covered with blood, the stool was saturated, and there

were even red splashes on the vault of the ceiling nine or ten feet from the floor. It was evident to all that the murderer had attacked the corn-chandler as he sat over his beer at the stove, smoking his pipe, and killed him unawares. The drawer of a commode up-stairs was pulled out, the doors of two cupboards in an adjoining room were open, and clothes lay scattered on the floor. But the murderer must have been hurried, for several presses had not been touched, a gold repeater and several silver ornaments were left, and even in those drawers which had been opened some valuables still remained. The murderer had evidently not ventured far up-stairs, for the rooms on the second floor were in their usual state. Near the entrance door lay two newly-baked rolls.

To enable our readers the better to realise the crime that had been perpetrated, it will be necessary for us to describe the Nuremberg corn-chandler's shop more minutely. The room, lined with shelves and chests, and about sixteen feet long, was lit by a large bow window, which also admitted light to the little window of a small inner parlour. The shop door, as usual at that period in Nuremberg, was formed of two flaps that fastened back in the daytime, and were replaced by a movable glass door. A bell over the entrance was so placed as to ring whenever either the glass or the wooden door was pushed open. This mysterious murder resembled in many points the terrific murder in Ratcliffe-highway, and all Nuremberg was paralysed to think of wretches capable of such deeds being still undiscovered in their midst.

A baker, named Stiedhof, who lived near the scene of the murder, at once came forward to inform the police that Bäumler's maid had bought two half-penny rolls at his shop the evening before, at rather more than a quarter before ten. His wife remembered recognising the girl just as she was going away, and asked her if there were customers at her master's. The girl replied sulkily, vexed at being sent out so late, "Yes, there are a few fellows still there." As the girl left, the baker's wife looked out of the window into the street, and remarked to her people how deadly silent it was. It was evident from this that the murder of the girl must have taken place on her return to her master's house with the rolls, and that Bäumler must have been murdered during her absence. Bäumler did not usually close

his shop till eleven, but on the night of the murder, a chandler named Rossel, who lived opposite, looking out about a quarter to ten, saw, to his surprise, that Bäumler's door was closed. The murderer had done this on the girl's departure; he must have killed the chandler, shifted the glass door off its hinges, closed the street entrance, and waited himself to open the door for the poor girl. The bell at the door was found stuffed with paper, no doubt to muffle the sound if any neighbours should be passing. The murderer, it was proved, had stayed, ransacking the house and changing his clothes, till half-past ten, as a shoemaker named Pühlez, who passed Bäumler's house at that hour, saw no light in the shop, but a light burning in the first floor. The most remarkable thing was, that no one in the adjoining houses had heard a scream, cry, or groan issue from Bäumler's house. Neither had two watchmen who were guarding some loaded waggons in the street close by. The wounds on the two bodies the surgeons pronounced to have been produced by blows from a hatchet, and the ribs of the man and his servant appeared to have been broken by the murderer stamping on his victims.

The persons of the town who had drunk that night at Bäumler's were then examined; they all agreed in remembering a silent, black-bearded, dark man, who had smoked and drank clove brandy from six o'clock, and had remained there alone when they left about nine. They all recollected that the man was about thirty, and that he wore a dark-coloured coat and high beaver hat. He had talked in an agreeable, sensible way, to one of them, but for the greater part of the time he kept silent, his hat pressed over his eyes, his eyes fixed on the ground. He called himself a hop-merchant, and said he was waiting for a companion who had gone to the play.

Suspicion soon led to the door of a certain Paul Forster, a man recently discharged from the Schwabach bridewell, and who for several days before the murder had been observed suspiciously lurking round Bäumler's house. Forster's father was a miserably poor day-labourer, who lived with two daughters of bad character in the suburb of St. John. Forster himself resided with a woman named Margaret Preiss, at Diesbeck. On searching her house there were found two bags of money; the one containing two hundred

and nine florins and twenty-one krentzers, the other one hundred and fifty-two florins and seventeen krentzers. As the gendarmes were conveying Forster through Fürth, a waiter of the inn came forward and identified the prisoner as a man who had come to the inn early on the morning after the murder, dressed in a dark grey cloth great-coat. He went away for an hour, then returned in a dark blue coat with a brown one rolled up under his arm. The latter coat he had requested the waiter to take care of for him for a week. The waiter was to be sure and show it to no one. The brown great-coat when examined was found in some places stained, in others soaked with blood.

The next step in Bavarian procedure was the terrible "Augenschein," or bringing together the murdered persons and the supposed criminal. Lady Duff Gordon has rendered this scene very ably from the German of the Remarkable Criminal Trials, written by that great psychological lawyer, Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach, the framer, in 1803, of the present criminal code of Bavaria, and who himself presided as judge at the trial of the wretch Forster. Forster stood between the two open coffins, with a hand on each corpse, but he betrayed no fear and no emotion.

From the very beginning nothing could be extorted from Forster. He even professed himself ignorant of why he was arrested, although from the shouts of the mob he said he had feared he was suspected of murder. He had been at Nürnberg seeking employment on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of September, and on the day the murder was committed left by the Frauen Thor for the suburb of St. John, where his father lived. He had slept in a gardener's hay-loft that night, and when the people got up at one o'clock in the morning to begin threshing, he had gone to Diesbeck, reaching there by about four P.M. the next day, the 21st. As for the bags of money, he had a tale ready devised. They were part of a treasure hidden at a spot between Fürth and Farnbach, by Xavier Beck, a jeweller, convicted of bigamy, who had been confined with him in the Schwabach bridewell.

Nevertheless, through the midst of these black lies truth was already darting keen rays. Two of the men drinking at Bäumler's on the night of the murder identified Forster as the silent guest, although he had since shaved off his thick black beard, and had had his long hair cut close. Margaret Preiss

—Forster's mistress—also gave evidence enough to hang a dozen men in any less dreamy and disputative country than Germany. He *had*, she said, returned to Diesbeck about four P.M. on the 21st. Even a murderer prides himself no doubt on being minutely truthful as to certain immaterial trifles—that consoles him. Instead of his usual old brown coat he had on a new blue one, he wore over his old trousers a new pair of large nankeen trousers, and he had a pair of new boots. He brought some money in a handkerchief which he said was not his, and which he handed her to keep, and he gave her daughter (a girl of fourteen) a Nuremberg thaler and a ducat. His feet were blistered, he seemed tired and moody, and out of spirits, and when she asked him the reason, he answered dryly, that nobody could be always cheerful. The next day he ate nothing, and still remained silent and thoughtful. The day after that, Saturday, he was arrested. When the men entered the room to apprehend him, he turned red as scarlet; but when she said, "You have been about some mischief," he merely replied, "Nay, I have done nothing."

A poor lead-pencil maker named Dörr, who lodged with old Forster and his disreputable daughters, deposed that at two A.M. on the Thursday, Paul Forster came under the cottage window at St. John, and called for his father, who was in the barn threshing. Forster's sister, Walburga, instantly jumped out of bed and fetched her father; the three then talked together at the back of the house, in a low voice, for half an hour. Walburga afterwards said her brother had gone hop-picking, and had given her a pair of boots. He had also paid his father an old debt of two or three florins. Thaler, the gardener, swore that his hay-loft was locked all night, and that Forster had not slept there the night in question.

Darker and darker grew every hour the clouds over Forster. A girl named Margaret Wölflin deposed she saw Walburga Forster bring an axe surreptitiously to Paul Forster, who was waiting for her in St. John's churchyard. On seeing Margaret notice the axe, Walburga desired her brother to take the axe to Nuremberg and get it ground. Forster cast an angry glance at witness as he left. The following morning Walburga met Margaret and told her of Bäumlér's murder. She was carrying her brother's wet boots in a basket. The same day Walburga told another wit-

ness that "if things went well, she would soon have a new petticoat as well as new boots." On first searching Forster's house, the police had noticed an axe wrapped in a wet rag lying behind the stove; they afterwards found this weapon behind a stack of wood. There was a stain of blood on the handle, and Margaret Wölflin, by a certain flaw, recognised this axe as the one she had seen Walburga hand to her brother in the churchyard. On her first examination Walburga confessed that her brother had borrowed the axe for a burglary he had planned, and which he afterwards told her had been unsuccessful. On a second examination, however, being closely pressed and admonished by the judge, she confessed that her brother had said to her on the night of the murder:

"I have committed a crime. I have done a great thing. I have murdered a man! Fetch my father quickly, I am going hop-picking. You wash the axe and the boots, and take care of them for me, so that no one may think anything of the matter."

On the boots she had observed large spots, which disappeared on washing, and which she supposed must have been blood. She added, in a subsequent examination, that the silk tassels of both boots were quite glued together with blood. A grey great-coat which Forster had changed at a Jew clothes woman's at Fürth was found to be Bäumlér's, and the white lining was stained with blood.

At this crisis Forster, after ruminating in the prison over the state of things, suddenly changed his tactics. He became violently truthful, requested an audience of Feuerbach, and made a confession which he said must lead to the instant detection of the murderer. The story of the suspected man ran thus:

On Monday, the 18th of September, he went from Diesbeck to Langenzenn, determined, in consequence of his misfortunes, to leave his native country, and to enlist as a soldier in Bohemia. While sitting in a melancholy mood by the roadside, near Langenzenn, two men, followed by a couple of dogs, came up to him, asked what was the matter, and, hearing his distress, expressed great interest in his fate. They told him that they were hop-merchants, of the name of Schlemmer, from Hersbruck; that they were brothers, and had rich relations in Bohemia, whither they were going with a cargo of hops, and offered to take him with them to Bohemia, where he would be sure

to find employment. They added that on the morrow of the next day (Wednesday, the day of the murder) they should be going with a hop cart into Nuremberg, where they had a cousin, a corn-chandler, of the name of Bäumlér, who lived near the church of St. Laurence. On the following day, the 19th of September, he went to Nuremberg, walked up and down the street near the church of St. Laurence, inquired of a barber for Bäumlér, and asked who the woman in the house might be. He was told that it was the maid. He waited in vain till six in the evening for the Schlemmers; then returned to the suburb of St. John, and slept in the shed. On the following morning, the 20th of September, he again went into the town, and after wandering about till four in the afternoon, the thought struck him that he would go and take leave of his sisters before starting for Bohemia. On this occasion his sister, Walburga, gave him an axe, with the request that he would take it to the grinder at Nuremberg, whence she would fetch it herself. At about five o'clock, as he was going with the axe to the grinder, he met the Schlemmers, who asked him to carry a letter to the post for them as quickly as possible, offering to take care of the axe in the mean time. After putting the letter into the post he returned to the spot, but did not find the Schlemmers, and passed the time in walking up and down the street, until about six o'clock, when he went into Bäumlér's house, and drank some red clove brandy. At a quarter before ten, when all the other guests were gone, the Schlemmers arrived, and Bäumlér greeted them as cousins. Soon after they sent Forster to wait in the Caroline-Strasse for their cart, which was coming from Fürth, drawn by two white horses. This he did; and soon after a quarter to ten, the two Schlemmers came to him, carrying a trunk between them, and one of them with a white parcel under his arm. At this moment the cart drove up with two men in it, to whom the Schlemmers said that they had had great luck; they had won the great prize. They then made him get into the cart with them. At the gate of the town they told him that as they had had such luck they should not go into Bohemia, but that, in order to show him how kindly they felt towards him, they would give him something which might assist him in his own country. They then gave him the white parcel, which one of them had under his arm, and at the same

time returned the axe to him. He then went back to the suburb of St. John, and on opening the parcel found in it a great-coat, a pair of boots, a pair of trousers, and three bags of money.

Towards the close of the trial Forster must have seen, and indeed he acknowledged as much, that, in spite of his courage, obstinacy, and cunning, truth could not be overpowered by fables and evasions. His obstinate perseverance in denial must, therefore, be attributed, not merely to a hope of thus avoiding capital punishment, but also to pride. Impressed with a conviction of his own mental superiority, and ambitious of a character for dauntless courage and immovable strength of will, he was resolved not to allow the judge to gain the slightest advantage over his feelings or his understanding. If he must fall, at least he would fall like a hero. If he could not avoid the fate of a criminal, he would avoid the disgrace of a confession wrung from weakness or cowardice. Men might shudder at him, but his fearful crimes should excite wonder, not contempt. The murder of Bäumlér and his maid was a crime which any common villain might commit; but to stand unmoved by all the dangers which followed the deed; to bid defiance to truth, and to the skill of the judge; to behold the most terrible sights with a steady gaze, and without one feeling of pity; to turn a deaf ear to the admonitions of conscience; to remain firm in the dreadful solitude of the cell, as well as in the presence of the court; this it was which raised him, in his own estimation, far above the common herd of criminals.

During the whole of this six hours' examination, this extraordinary man stood, without ever resting. He only once hesitated when he was cross-examined about the dress and appearance of the two fabulous hop-merchants of Hersbruck. The police, who seldom keep their minds entirely unbiassed, now began to hunt on an entirely wrong trail. They suspected that Forster had had accomplices, and searched high and low for the imaginary companions for whom Forster, in the brandy-shop, had said he was waiting. Two men had been seen under a tree on the bank of the river under the fortress at Nuremberg, where Forster was chained, and, on their pelting the soldier, he had fired at them. Forster's sister deposed to seeing some one waiting for him when he returned the axe. Moreover, it was reported by his friends that poor Bäumlér had had nearly two thousand

florins stored in his house, whereas only three hundred and sixty florins were found in Forster's possession. Bavaria was dragged from north to south—even as far as Frankfort-on-the-Maine arrests were made; all friends of the murderer and his suspicious sister were examined, so were many convicts who had been his special intimates, but all this led to nothing.

It is difficult to see what more evidence could be wanted than was already in possession of the judges. Forster had been observed reconnoitring Bäumler's house before the murder; he had been identified as the man who remained in moody silence in the shop the very night of the crime; Bäumler's clothes, smeared with blood, had been found in his possession; his own sister had declared that he had confessed to her his committal of the act. The very axe (and the murderer had without doubt used an axe) that he had used had been found at his house; he had failed in proving any alibi; his boots had been seen stained with blood. Yet the German lawyers plodded on, till thirteen long examinations had given time for one thousand three hundred questions being put to the unwavering, inflexible, iron-hearted wretch. Obdurate as a Hindoo fakir, stubborn as an Indian chief, he stood for five or six hours together, without flinching or wavering. His deportment is graphically described by Feuerbach:

"All means of attack recoiled from his iron soul; neither the bloody clothes, nor the axe, nor confrontation with his sister and other witnesses could shake him. If a passing flush or paleness, or a downcast eye, occasionally betrayed surprise and embarrassment, it was but for a moment, and he quickly recovered his self-possession. When the axe was produced, his changing colour and rolling eye betrayed the fearful torture within; but his voice and his answers remained unshaken. Upon being confronted with his sister, Walburga, he seemed confused, his colour fled, and his hands trembled; but he still preserved so complete a command over himself as to look her full in the face whilst he denied the most manifest truths. During the wholespecial inquisition, the emotions he exhibited were those of a wild beast suddenly caught in a net, vainly seeking an outlet by which to escape from the hunters who surround him. When the judge animadverted upon his changing colour or embarrassed air, he replied with perfect truth, 'It is quite possible for an innocent man

to seem more embarrassed than a guilty one; the latter knows exactly what he has done, the former feels that he cannot prove his innocence.' He concealed his obstinacy under an assumption of calmness, gentleness, and piety, as if humbly submitting to a fate he did not deserve. 'I see plainly,' said he in his last examination, 'that I cannot escape unless the Schlemmers are taken. I have therefore nothing to do but to pray to God that he will enlighten my judges, and enable them to distinguish between guilt and innocence, between the possible and the impossible. In this case guilt and innocence touch, and I have no means of proving my innocence.' The following circumstance will give some idea of his cunning, hypocrisy, and dissimulation. During the trial, a certain John Wagner, who had formerly been in prison with him at Schwabach, was confronted with him to give evidence touching expressions which Forster had dropped concerning some scheme for future crimes. Wagner, on this occasion, accused him of stealing a pair of silk braces. Forster denied the charge, and even when the braces were produced in court and identified by Wagner, he persisted in his denial. But in the solitude of his prison, he reflected that he could turn this incident to good account, in giving an air of truth to his falsehoods respecting the murder. Accordingly, after an interval of two days, he requested an audience, appeared before the judge, with downcast looks and trembling hands, like one bowed down by shame and remorse, and confessed in a circumstantial manner that 'he had given way to the temptations of Satan, and that he had stolen Wagner's silk braces.' This confession was doubtless intended to convince the judge that one whose tender conscience could not bear even the burden of a stolen pair of braces, would be still less able to endure the remorse which must follow a double murder."

At last, on the 22nd of July, 1821, sentence was passed. Convicted of the murder of Bäumler and his maid-servant, Forster was condemned to imprisonment for life in chains. His sister, Walburga, for aiding and abetting in the murder, received twelve months in the House of Correction, and Margaret Preiss was acquitted.

In prison Forster was like a bronze statue. He said to some of his fellow-prisoners, "If ever I get into trouble again I will persist in denial till my tongue turns black, and rots in my mouth, and my body is bent double."

The rascal had known perfectly well that unless he made a voluntary confession (for torture had been abolished in Bavaria in 1806) the Bavarian law did not allow him to be put to death. The being exposed in a pillory in chains, with a placard on his breast before Bäumler's shop, in the Königsstrasse, did not shake for a moment his nerves of steel.

In 1817, during his imprisonment at Schwabach, this murderer had written a sentimental autobiography, which he entitled, *The Romance of my Life and Loves*. It seems that, as a boy, he had hung about public-houses, running errands for the citizens who came there to play loto. He had then become a foot-boy to a Prussian baron, with whose children he used to play. Refusing to become a shoemaker, he had turned gardener, till in 1807 he was drawn in the conscription, and enrolled in a regiment of the line. He made the campaign against Austria in 1809, was taken prisoner, and ransomed himself. Dismissed on furlough, he became a tavern keeper, and was punished for theft upon his guests. Twice deserting his regiment, the incorrigible man was sentenced to run the gauntlet three times backwards and forwards past one hundred and fifty men, and to return to military service for six additional years. On the very day of his punishment he again deserted, and again received the same sentence. In 1815 he was found guilty of desertion, fraud, and conspiracy, and drummed out of the regiment. He then turned day-labourer and thief alternately, and in 1816 was tried at Nuremberg for theft and house-breaking, and sentenced to three years and six months imprisonment in the House of Correction. In consequence of his good conduct in prison, however, Forster was released at the expiration of three-fourths of his time, exactly four weeks before the murder. The hypocritical and sentimental autobiography of Forster, in spite of some faults of spelling, displayed considerable cleverness, and was stuffed with texts of Scripture.

"Several anecdotes," says Feuerbach, "for instance, the account of his childish amour with a girl of eleven, of the name of Wilhelmina, and of his stealing out of the camp at Fürth, to visit his mistress, Babette, at Nuremberg, are told with a clearness, simplicity, and truth that would do credit to many a practised pen. But by far the greater part, and especially the long diffuse preface, is written in the pompous

inflated style of the worst romances. In many places he has introduced songs and poems, borrowed from the best German authors, which, according to his own account, he sang or recited, on various occasions, and which he pretends to have composed himself! His head seems to have been crammed with sentimental phrases and romantic images, which excite disgust and horror in the mouth of such a being. This tiger, who, with a hand reeking with the blood of an old man, could murder an innocent and beautiful girl, can talk 'of departed souls that hold constant communion with him;' of the 'soft murmur of the evening breezes,' and of the melting harmony of the senses, which, after his death, would inform his beloved Margaretha, that he was near her." Of his "name, which would die away in the shadow of the grave, like the echo of the songs of love;" of the "glancing of the moonbeams upon the silver stream of the Pegnitz;" and of himself in his seventeenth year, as "a half-blown rose on a beautiful morning in spring." Who could have recognised the murderer Forster in the following passages? "Ah! for one thing I praise God," says he in his preface, apostrophising Margaretha; "for this, that our child, the first fruit of our love, sleeps the sleep of peace! When he was torn from me I accused Heaven, and could not understand the inscrutable ways of God, but murmured against him. But now I shed tears of joy that he is safe, and I pluck the flowers of the valley to weave fresh garlands for his grave. Oh! do you remember how I planted the forget-me-nots upon his little green grave? Then my heart knew not God, and my tears flowed in the violence of my sorrow. I thought myself the most miserable of men. I now understand things better." Passages like these—and there are many such—merely prove the utter corruption of one who, cold and hardened as he was, could use the language of the most devout piety and ape the most tender sensibility. The high principle and love of virtue, of which he boasts, were as false as his sentiment. He could not have forgotten, while writing, that he was then in prison for theft; and yet he has the shameless effrontery to write these words in his preface: "Oh! Margaretha! tell our daughter what present help in trouble is the innocence of the heart; how it inspires us with heroic strength to support the heaviest affliction." And who would not attribute the following phrase to a philosopher

rather than to a housebreaker? "I know not which best deserves the name of heroism—that courage which enables a man to conceal his woes within his own breast, in order to spare pain and sorrow to others, or that which induces him to sacrifice himself for the preservation of another."

In the fortress of Lichtenau Forster seemed never tired of talking of this Margaretha, the woman whom he had intended to marry. He had tattooed on his breast, in red letters, the words "My heart is Margaretha's." To a fellow-prisoner he said, "I have but one wish, to see my dear mistress once more, and die." In sullen silence he bore his long years of imprisonment, perhaps indulging some hope that he might eventually, by such inflexible will, tire out his judges, and procure his liberty. When a prisoner (before his solitary cell was prepared) exhorted him to confess, he replied, "Steadfastness of purpose is the chief ornament of a man! One should not easily give up life; however wretched, life is a noble thing. Believe me, comrade, whenever I look at my chains and the ball attached to them, I feel proud to think that even on my death-bed my last breath shall be drawn with courage. In my earliest days, whatever I undertook, that I did. As I said before, steadfastness and secrecy are what adorn a man." He treated his heavy chains as badges of honour, and polished them at his leisure hours till they shone like silver. During the early period of his imprisonment at Lichtenau, where the most distinguished villains enthusiastically admired and revered him, he condescended to amuse them with stories of enchanted princes and princesses, fortunate robbers, &c., to shorten their long, dreary, evening hours. But one night he suddenly declared, "Gentlemen, from this time forth, I shall tell you no more stories. I see plainly that things look ill with me, and that among the bad I am supposed to be the worst of all." One of his fellow-prisoners asked him whether any one had forbidden him to speak, or whether he had taken offence? But he answered, "No one but my own soul forbids me, and that has never counselled me amiss." Pride kept him true to his word; from that time forward he told no more stories, and answered only in monosyllables. Thus he stood alone, distinguished from the common herd of malefactors. He maintained this sullen silence for years in his solitary cell, asking nothing and uttering no complaint. He took

what was offered to him, suffered anything to be taken from him, bore everything in sullen silence and with apparent calmness. He even managed to give an appearance of quiet submission to the obstinate resistance which he offered to the orders of his superiors. His pride was to prove the inflexibility of his will. Once when a task was imposed upon him he refused to do it. He was punished with lashes, but he never stirred a muscle, never uttered a groan, and returned to his cell still refusing to work. No punishment could bend him, till lighter work was substituted, and that he performed with regularity. He acted the part of innocence and piety to the last. He frequently read his hymn-book, listened to the Sunday sermons, and received the sacrament on the usual festivals. If asked about his crimes he either begged not to be questioned, told his stock story of the two hopmerchants, or blamed the Nuremberg people for railing at him as a murderer, and driving him to tell his first and only falsehood, which had led his judge to disbelieve his subsequent true narrative. Hardened as he was, however, it appears that he did not altogether escape from the pangs of a guilty conscience; he frequently sighed deeply; and once, when a lawyer well acquainted with his whole case visited him in prison, vividly represented to him the heinousness of his crime, spoke to him of the heavy burden on his conscience, far heavier to bear in silence than the weight of his chains, then proceeded to describe the bloody scene of the 20th of September, 1820, and to bring before him the victims bleeding under the axe, and trodden under his feet, the sullen countenance of the prisoner suddenly flushed scarlet, and a person present thought he saw tears in his eyes. Some months after this visit an organ was placed in the chapel of the prison, and the sacrament administered on the occasion. Forster, who had hitherto always displayed the most callous indifference, was deeply affected. Approaching the altar, supporting his chains and bullet in both arms, he trembled in every limb, tears gushed from his eyes, and his loud sobs filled the chapel. What he thought or felt, whether the notes of the organ pealed in his ear like the "Dies iræ, Dies illa," could not be discovered. When he returned to his cell he was sullen and impenetrable as before.

Forster is described as having a vulgar, heavy countenance. The lower part of his

long narrow face was of unusual length. His expression, singularly animal, revolting and hard, never changed, so that his head seemed like that of a marble statue but for two large dark prominent eyes which were filled with rage and despair, and usually fixed on the ground. That Forster, impenitent to the last, died in prison long since, there can be no doubt, but Feuerbach, in his remarkable work, does not mention his death. We leave the murderer, then, in the deepening gloom of the prison cell, and in that ominous darkness part from the doomed wretch for ever.

THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXV. SIMON DOES HIS OWN WORK.

In the mean time, Simon had been anxiously expecting his nephew, who strangely absented himself, instead of hastening to complete that engagement which he had almost entered into with his employer. The old man's head was now as busy with Scotch shepherds, as that of his ancient predecessor had been bewitched by the dream of multitudes of spreading trees. He wished to exterminate every peasant, and to cut down the idle woods. He wished to see herds of sleek animals grazing over his land, to have his money in large sums, and no risk about getting it.

He did not know what his nephew could mean by staying away so long, having expected the young man to return to him immediately, lest a terrible threat which had been uttered should be fulfilled without delay. Yet the weeks passed on, and Paul did not appear, while the old man chafed and fretted about his house, and roamed out into the woods, cursing his nephew and his own wretched fate, since he did not find one creature in the world whom he could trust.

Tibbie observed him from her secret hiding-place, and knew the cause of his anger; watched her opportunity, and presented herself before him. She had hung up her mandrake in a corner of the kitchen where it surveyed all her labours and her idlings. Confident in her possession of good luck, she did not fear Simon, and her shrewdness suggested the best way of dealing with her aggrieved master, who scarcely listened to her penitent speeches and professions of attachment, but seized on her offers of service with the greatest eagerness. He was in bad need of a mes-

senger, and Tibbie was ready to go anywhere. Yes, she would go in search of Paul Finiston, though she knew very well that he had gone to Camlough. After a long day's absence, she came back with her news; Paul had gone away for his own amusement, and no one in the country seemed to know when he would return.

Simon's rage at hearing this was extreme. Tibbie slunk away out of reach till his passion was exhausted, and then, when she found him feeble and prostrate, with neither voice nor breath left, she ventured again before him, and talked as she had a mind to talk. She told him that Paul Finiston never had intended to work for him; that he had wanted to be his heir, and that was all; laughing in his sleeve while he pretended to be his servant. Of course he was now the heir, and would amuse himself as he pleased till such time as his uncle's death should put him in possession of great wealth. Fine people were courting him, because of those riches which he boasted must be his; and he reckoned on having enough to spend in his lifetime without troubling himself about laying up an increase. Having made these statements, Tibbie went back triumphantly to her kitchen, no longer to hide, but to reign as in former times. Simon was glad to have her at hand, for, his rage expended, he was feverish with new plans. He would be king in his own kingdom, and Tibbie should for the moment be his minister. Tibbie should go in search of the bailiff, so that notices of ejectment might be served without delay; and if the people refused to move, why then Simon, having cast off Paul, would prove that he could yet do business without help from his unworthy kinsman. He would hire some stout assistants, who must at least do their duty by him for a day; but longer than one day he would trust no man again.

Tibbie set off on her errand on a merry summer morning, and she went greatly out of her way to carry her news across the mountains. Con followed after her heels, but he was busy watching the squirrels in the trees, and the leverets on the heath. The world was gay for the fool, and he grew merrier and noisier as he got nearer to the clouds. He knew that he was going a visiting to his friends up in the hills.

The first house they arrived at was happy Bid's! The old woman was preparing for a ramble through the country with her basket of wares. The basket sat on the

table full of little pictures in brass frames, pin-boxes, and pin-cushions, dressing-combs, and rosary-beads, tin brooches, and glass ear-rings, besides many other valuables fit to make eyes dance at her coming. By it lay her staff. The fire was raked on the hearth in preparation for a long absence of the householder from her home; that home of which she was so proud, and which had made her old age so honourable. The place looked as clean as a new pin, and she had got a chair for a visitor, and a little stool for herself, a very tiny table, and a dresser with some crockery. Three gaudy pictures, with brazen frames, were hung round the walls, and gave the place quite a splendid look. The first was the Nativity, the second the Crucifixion, the third the Resurrection of the Lord; and these made a history, which were as Scriptures for Bid, to whom the alphabet was but a string of hieroglyphics. All these delights she had tasted and enjoyed; but Tibbie had come to tell her that the feast was at an end.

Bid herself, queen of her castle, came forward to meet the visitors, brimming full of the good-humour of hospitality. She was dressed ready for travel in the usual long grey cloak and bright scarlet kerchief, she had also a new white cap, whose borders looked as fresh round her pleasant face as a spring hedge round a garden. By such signs of luxury one could see the change in her life. Well might she smile on visiting neighbours, even though Tibbie should come amongst them. She had not much to offer to any one, besides a seat on her chair and a sight of her pictures; but to Bid's manner of thinking this was no mean entertainment.

Tibbie was presented with the chair and Con with the stool, and Bid sat down on her floor which was well-nigh as clean as a satin couch.

"There'll be a bit of a note comin' to ye, by-an-bye," said Tibbie, "but maybe ye won't be able to read it."

"Deed an' I can't," said Bid. "Ye'll tell me what'll be in it?"

"That's aisy done," said Tibbie. "Ye'll be out o' this, bag an' baggage, before this day month."

Bid, who had been so happy, turned as white as her nice clean cap.

"Anan?" she said faintly; but she knew the whole story well.

"Yer bad ways is found out," continued Tibbie, speaking loud in the pride of her office. "I wonder yer not ashamed to steal

yer lan'lord's land. Ye thought to sit here free because the old man was dotin', but he's not dotin' a bit, an' he's doin' his work himsel' these days. He'll be up wid ye in a fortnit's time, an' I advise ye not to sit waitin' for him."

Poor Bid listened with meekness; she was indeed overthrown from her glory; her old hands fell lax in her lap; her very cap-border hung limp by her cheeks.

"Because, having lifted me up Thou hast cast me down." So said Bid's dim eyes, which had no thought of rebellion in their sadness. She only found, suddenly, that she could no longer be a queen. It was plain that the Lord had not loved her in her pride.

"It's all right, ma'am," she said, plucking up her spirits; "on'y there's wan thing I would ax ye. Would a small trifle o' rent be like to make a differ? The basket has done beautiful wid me, an' by manes o' the pinch of hunger I could save up a little somethin'."

"Sorra bit o' differ," said Tibbie. "Simon wants the lan'. There's gran' rich cattle fellas comin' to the hills; an' it's not the likes o' you that's goin' to stan' in the road o' sheep an' fat bullocks. I'm thinkin' Simon's tired o' gettin' his money in ha'pence an' pence. But I'm too long talkin' to ye; I must be off to the widow Kearney's."

At the sound of her friend's name the expression of Bid's meek face was changed. A look of lively terror came into her eyes.

"The Kearneys!" she cried. "Oh, ye niver meant the Kearneys. Yer niver goin' to them on the same arrant ye came to me?"

"Maybe not," said Tibbie, "but I know my own business."

Con had been hovering about the cabin, looking at Bid's pictures, and hanging with rapture over the treasures in her basket. When Bid cried out "the Kearneys!" in a tone of anguish, he started and gazed at her, and his white face turned red. Then he looked at Tibbie, and his brows began to lower, and he went and took his stand by the side of Bid.

"Nan!" said the fool.

But Bid was too much afflicted to give any heed to him. Her eyes had now got fire in them, and her figure had lost its limpness. She got up and grasped her staff, and prepared to follow Tibbie.

"He thrown them out wanst," she said, "an' will he thrown them out again! What

ha' they done to Simon but pay him his heavy dues? The Lord, sure, will be even wid him wan day for the like o' this!"

"Curses does no good," said Tibbie, virtuously.

"I do not curse," said Bid, "but oh, Mary, my poor frien', it's the says'll get you now!"

Con was white again, and he listened with all his ears. He knew there was come some trouble upon his friends; knew that Bid was grieving for them, and that Tibbie had brought the grief. He handed her staff to Bid and pulled her to the door. "Nan!" he kept saying, "Nan!" But Bid wept loudly as they went along the heath.

The Kearneys saw them coming, and many smiling faces appeared at the door; but the smiles soon faded away into looks of sorrow and amazement. Who had seen Bid cry since she buried her last child?

Mrs. Kearney went out full of sympathy to meet her weeping friend.

"Oh, Mary, my poor woman!" said Bid, "it's the throuble that's come to yer door!"

Tibbie now played her part and announced the miser's will.

"It's none o' my fault," she added, sulkily, as she met the frantic eyes of the mother of many children. Mrs. Kearney threw her apron over her face and retreated into the cabin; but Nan stepped up and spoke to the bearer of evil tidings; her blue eyes flashed and she tossed her yellow locks.

"Don't come here again," she said, "or ye'll have cause to rue the day. What do we care for Simon when the Lord has give us Paul?"

"Paul, inagh!" sneered Tibbie. "It's much he cares for the likes o' you! He's dancing 'an singin' at Camlough, an' ye'll all be out o' the country afore he comes back."

"We'll not be out o' the country," said Nan. "We'll walk, if it was on our knees, till we find him an' tell our story."

"Ye needn't walk on yer knees, nor on yer head neither," said Tibbie, "for he wouldn't lift a hand for ye if he was here this very day. An' what's more, if he would, he has no more power nor you have. Simon has cast him off, an' is doin' the work hissel'."

Nan bent her fair head, and a cry went out from her lips. If Paul was taken from them, then, indeed, their case was desperate.

Bid and Mary were together weeping in the cabin, and the gossoons were on their knees comforting their mother. Con had been an eager listener to all that passed between Nan and Tibbie, his shifting gaze becoming every moment more pitiful when turned on the one, and more lowering when directed towards the other. Nan's sharp cry seemed to madden his simple brain. He turned into the cabin and seized a creepie stool, heavy enough to break a human skull. Tibbie saw him flying out of the doorway, with face of fury, and the stool swung above his head. She cried out loudly, and fled a few paces, then had just time to stoop before the "creepie" whizzed over her shoulders. Death had been very near her; she retreated hastily, and disappeared behind the rocks; while Nan laid hold of Con and dragged him into the cabin.

After this Bid and the Kearney family held counsel together as to what there was to be done in this sad strait. Paul was their only hope, and he was gone to Camlough. The only thing they could think of was that Bid should go without delay to Miss May at the old abbey. If there was any tale or tidings of him she would have it, without a doubt.

Bid took up her staff, and set out with a heavy heart. She arrived at the little gate, and walked up through the pretty rose-garden, and round the back way to the kitchen.

"Yer welcome!" said Nanny, with her fingers on her lips; "but ye'll plase to make no noise, for our young mistress is sick."

This was bad news to Bid, but she came in as invited. She was far too discreet to speak to the servants about Paul, but asked to see Miss Martha; and Bridget went to tell the old lady, who was sitting in May's room. The chamber was very silent, the blinds were all drawn down, and the figure in the bed lay with its face turned to the wall.

"It's Bid the thraveller, ma'am," whispered Bridget; "an' she wanted Mither Finiston. An' whin she couldn't see him, she's axin now for Miss May."

"You needn't have come in," said Miss Martha; "Miss May is too ill——"

"Let her come in, Aunty," said May, sitting up in her bed.

"My love, you know you are ill——"

"I have plenty of time to be ill, Aunty; I want to see old Bid."

Miss Martha was obliged to relent, and

Bid was brought into the bedroom. Miss Martha warned her not to stay too long, and went away to give some orders to Nanny.

Bid coming in, leaning on her staff, saw two hollow eyes bent on her out of a white eager face.

"You are good to come to visit me, Bid. Have you got any news for me?"

"Ill news, honey—nothin' but ill news. There's cattle comin' till the mountain, an' the poor'll have to go. For Simon's taken to mind the lan' hissel'. But it's cruel o' me to be tellin' ye this, and yer cheeks the colour they are."

"Never mind my cheeks, Bid; tell me all about it."

Bid told her the whole: how thirty families, for the first instalment, were to be turned out of house and home; how the very huts they had built of the mud, and hollowed out of the sandy cliffs, were priced so high above their heads that they could not hope to pay for them, even if they were able to live like the flowers—on air, and the dews from heaven. How some that had paid heavily for many a long year were to go now at last, no matter what they might promise. This one was bound to go, and that one was going too. At the Kearneys, Bid broke down. There was no hope for the Kearneys, and the old woman could tell no more.

"Your own little house, Bid. That will be safe enough?"

"Oh, throth!" cried Bid, tossing her head, "it's little matter about a body like me. I was thrampin' long enough, an' I can take to the thramp again. But I thought if Mr. Paul was to the fore, sich business couldn't go on."

"I think he would try to prevent it, but you know he is not here. Mr. Paul is gone to Camlough and we do not see him now."

Bid looked at the strained fevered eyes, and at the little wasted hands, that were locked so tight together; and she knew how things were going here, and that there was no hope at all.

"You see," she said, evasively, "it's goin' this ways wid Simon, that he's comin' near his death. The misers o' Tobereevil does always get a bit harder an' crueller afore their end. It's the way the curse works in them, an' the Lord on'y knows

why it should be. Who it is that'll come after him there's no one now can tell, since he has cut off Misther Paul.

"Cut him off, did you say, Bid?"

"That's what I said, an' sure it's little ye need vex. On'y the poor need fret, that doesn't know who'll come over them."

"Are you sure that it is true? Then I thank Heaven. Do you think, Bid, that when the property is gone to another, and he ceases to be the heir, do you think then that the curse will let him go?"

"I'm thinkin' that it will, honey; I'm thinkin' that it will. An' sure it's better to be a poor body wid the blessin' o' the Lord, nor be rich an' have the divil playin' thricks on ye all yer life."

"Listen to me, Bid. Can I put a great, great trust in you?"

"God sees if ye do ye'll not put it to the bad."

"I want you to go to Camlough."

"I'll go, avourneen."

"I want you to go to Camlough, and to see Mr. Paul Finiston. You will notice what he is doing, how he looks, and how he speaks. You see, Bid, it is not natural, this that has happened to him; he is not the man to go away and forget his friends. I don't understand the curse, nor how it works, but it seems to me that it puts his mind astray, so that his enemies have got power over him. He believed this himself, and I promised that I would save him. But now he is far away, and I am too weak to move. There is only one who can help me, and that is you."

"Tell me what to do," said Bid, drawing her cloak about her, and grasping her staff.

"Nothing," said May, "except to go to Camlough upon some errand of your own. Observe all you can, and come back to me with news."

Then Miss Martha returned to the room, and the old woman went away.

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